

## **Tobacco**

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### **Hearing on the Regulation of Tobacco Products House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health and the Environment April 14, 1994**

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:05 a.m., 2123 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Henry A. Waxman (chairman) presiding.

#### **[Opening Statement from Chairman Henry A. Waxman]**

MR. WAXMAN. The meeting of the subcommittee will come to order. I'd like to ask our guests to please take your seats. This is an historic hearing. For the first time ever, the chief executive officers of our Nation's tobacco companies are testifying together before the U.S. Congress. They are here because this subcommittee has legislative jurisdiction over those issues that affect our health. And no health issue is as important as cigarette smoking. It is sometimes easier to invent fiction than to face the truth. The truth is that cigarettes are the single most dangerous consumer product ever sold. Nearly a half million Americans die every year as a result of tobacco. This is an astounding, almost incomprehensible statistic. Imagine our Nation's outrage if two fully loaded jumbo jets crashed each day, killing all aboard. Yet that is the same number of Americans that cigarettes kill every 24 hours. Sadly, this deadly habit begins with our kids. Each day 3,000 children will begin smoking. In many cases they become hooked quickly and develop a life long addiction that is nearly impossible to break. For the past 30 years a series of surgeons general have issued comprehensive reports outlining the dangers these children will eventually face. Lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, bladder cancer, and stroke are only some of the diseases caused by tobacco causes. And now we know that kids will face a serious health threat even if they don't smoke. Environmental tobacco smoke is a Class A carcinogen, and it sickens more than 1 million kids every year. In fact, five former surgeons general of the United States testified before this subcommittee this year, that the most important legislation in disease prevention that we could enact would be restrictions on smoking in public places. This subcommittee will soon act on that legislation, and it will consider other measures as well. This hearing will aid our efforts by presenting an important perspective. But these hearings are important for another reason as well. For decades the tobacco companies have been exempt from the standards of responsibility and accountability that apply to all other American corporations. Companies that sell that sell aspirin, cars, and soda are all held to strict standards when they cause harm. We don't allow those companies to sell goods that recklessly endanger consumers. We don't allow them to suppress evidence of dangers when harm occurs. We don't allow them to ignore science and good sense. And we demand that when problems occur, corporations and their senior executives be accountable to Congress and the public. This hearing marks the beginning of a new relationship between Congress and the tobacco companies. The old rules are out, the standards that apply to every other company are in. We look forward to hearing the testimony this morning, and to working with these companies to begin to reduce the extraordinary public health threat that tobacco poses.

An old proverb says that a journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step. Today is the first step. Many more are to come as we deal with the most serious health problem facing our Nation.

#### **[Tobacco company CEOs declare, under oath, that nicotine is not addictive]**

MR. WYDEN. Let me begin my questioning on whether or not nicotine is addictive. Let me ask you first, and I'd like to just go down the row, whether each of you believes that nicotine is not addictive. I heard virtually all of you touch on it. Yes or no, do you believe nicotine is not addictive? MR. CAMPBELL

(President of Philip Morris U.S.A.).

I believe nicotine is not addictive, yes.MR. WYDEN. Mr. Johnston?

MR. JAMES JOHNSTON (Chairman and CEO of RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company). Mr. Congressman, cigarettes and nicotine clearly do not meet the classic definition of addiction. There is no intoxication.

MR. WYDEN. We'll take that as a "no." Again, time is short. I think that each of you believe that nicotine is not addictive. We would just like to have this for the record.

MR. TADDEO (President of U.S. Tobacco).

I don't believe that nicotine or our products are addictive. MR. TISCH (Chairman and CEO of Lorillard Tobacco Company).

I believe that nicotine is not addictive. MR. HERRIGAN (Chairman and CEO of Liggett Group).

I believe that nicotine is not addictive.

MR. SANDEFUR (Chairman and CEO of Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company).

I believe that nicotine is not addictive.

MR. DONALD JOHNSTON (President and CEO of American Tobacco Company).

And I, too, believe that nicotine is not addictive.